

IN THE SPECIFICATION (Marked-up version)

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DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION AND PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A coin operated entertainment automat designated with reference numeral 1 includes a start button 15 and a symbol display device 2, which can be formed as a monitor or as a flat picture screen. Operating elements 3 are disposed below the symbol display device 2 in the kind that an operating element 3 is associated to each presented winning symbol. A breakout 4 is furnished neighboring to the symbol display device 2, where a money or bank note testing device follows to the breakout 4. An opening 5 for receiving coins is disposed below the breakout 4. The coin actuated entertainment automat 1 comprises a coin collection position, not illustrated in detail, with a payout device 18. The course control is performed by way of a control unit 7 comprising a microcomputer 8, wherein the control unit 7 controls the total and complete game course and function course of the coin actuated entertainment automat 1.

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The device groups required for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat 1 are illustrated as a block circuit diagram in figure 2. The entertainment automat 1 comprises a symbol game device 2 comprising a picture screen tube or, respectively, a flat picture screen, by way of which symbol combinations are presented and displayed, wherein a winning value of different level is coordinated to some of the symbol combinations. The symbol game device 2 is connected to a control unit 7 by way of an intermediary of video controller 6 having a symbol memory storage. The control unit 7 of the coin actuated entertainment automat 1 comprises a microcomputer 8 with the calculating circuit 9, a control circuit 10 and accumulators 11. The programs, such as pseudo random number generator program, winning value recognition program, display control program, and winning plan program, required, are contained in a fixed value memory storage (read only memory ROM) 12. The for each entered game determined pseudo random numbers are intermediately stored in an

operating data memory storage (random access memory RAM) 13 connected to a bus system 19. In addition, obtained values are registered in credit balance counters and other counters in the operational data memory storage (random access memory RAM) 13.

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The control circuit 7 comprises a communications board 20 in addition to a microcomputer 8 connected to a power supply 16. An input/output interface 14 is connected to the power supply 8. A coin is tested in the coin testing device 17 connected to the input/output interface 14. The display means 21 of a jackpot and a data exchange and data balancing of the entertainment automat 1 disposed in the communications network are controlled by the communications board 20. In addition, the microcomputer 8 includes a serial interface not illustrated. A connection is furnished to the

communications board 20 with the serial interface (TTL-level). The serial interface is formed as an RS 232 interface.

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The communications board 20 comprises a self-contained CPU 22 (Hitachi 64 180 or a Zilog Z80 180) with the serial interface [32] 23 disposed on the CPU side. The central processing unit CPU 22 has coordinated a fixed value memory storage 24 (read only memory ROM) of the type 27C 1000/2000 and a battery buffered operating data storage 25 (random access memory RAM) of the type DS 1225/1230Y. The connection between the central processing unit CPU 22, the memory components 24, 25 and a serial communications controller 28 (Zilog Z85 C30) with the serial ports is performed by way of an address decoder 26 and an I/O decoder 27 and a bus. A serial port 29 of the communications controller 28 leads under connection of a power amplifier 30 (MAX483 or MAX487) to the display means 21 formed as a large display field, with

which the temporary jackpot stand is displayed. An external personal-computer not illustrated is connectable at an interface 31 of the communications controller 28 formed as an RS 232 interface. An interface adapter 33 is connected at a serial interface 32 of the communications controller 28 formed as a serial interface RS 485. The interface adapter 33 comprises essentially an optical coupler 35 of the type 6 N 136 for galvanic separation and a power stage 34 disposed successively to the optical coupler 35. The network cabling is connected to the power stage 34.

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In case of an activation of an operational element (entry block 41 -- 42) it is determined, which operational element 3 was actuated. In case of actuation of an operational element 3 according to the entry block 41, then for example, five card symbols disposed next to each other are presented with the symbol display device 2 wherein the symbol storage comprises 20 card symbols, namely ten, Jack, Queen, King, and ace in each case in all

four colors. The not held cards are drawn by new cards determined randomly from the card storage in the operational block 43. The winning value of the displayed symbol combination is determined and displayed in the operational block 44. In the following it is checked in the branching block 45, if the maximum winning value, for example a Royal Flush, is displayed with the symbol display device 2. In case of a non-reaching of the maximum winning value, a return is performed from the [operational block 45] branching block 45 to the branching block 39 by checking the game time. In case of a reaching of the maximum winning value, a return is performed from the branching block 45 to the operational block 38, wherein new winning symbols are randomly determined in the operational block 38 and are displayed with the symbol display device 2. Upon remaining of a residual game time the winning symbols displayed with the symbol display device 2 can be held in the following by activation of the operational element 3 (operational block 42, operational block 46) or all cards held so far can be thrown out by actuation of the entry block 41.

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Several coin operated entertainment automats 1 of the same construction type are networked to each other according to a further embodiment of the Invention illustrated in Figure 7. The network (operational block 49) is initiated by actuating the power switch of each entertainment automat 1, wherein one of the entertainment automats 1 assumes the master function according to Figure 5. The further entertainment automats 1 present in the network switch to a slave function according to Figure 6. The master function comprises essentially that the coordination of the entertainment automats 1 present in the network is assumed, in particular with respect to the collection of data through the counter state of the jackpot amount and the release of a common special game, which takes place at all entertainment automats 1 present in the network at the same time. In case of a sufficient credit balance state a symbol combination is randomly determined in the operational block 50 and is displayed in the symbol display device 2. An adjustable shared part amount of the game stake of each base game is transferred to a common

jackpot counter (operational block 51). The counter state of the jackpot counter is checked in a branching block 51 following to the determination of the winning value in the base game. If the predetermined jackpot counter state is reached or surpassed, then the master (operational block 53) sends a control signal to all other entertainment automats 1 present in the network, wherein the slaves switch to the special game based on the control signal after termination of the base game. It is monitored in the operational block 54, if an okay signal was returned by all slaves. In the following the special game is started at the same time in all participating coin actuated entertainment [automat] automats 1.